Midwest and Its Children: The Psychological Ecology of an American Town. by Roger G. Barker; Herbert F. Wright
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Midwest and Its Children: The Psychological Ecology of an American Town. By ROGER G. BARKER and HERBERT F. WRIGHT. Evanston, Illinois: Row, Peterson and Company, 1955. vii, 532 pp. $7.50.

This is the definitive report of seven years of research into the psychological ecology of a midwestern town with 721 inhabitants. Classical natural history field studies provided the model the authors report they followed; but most of the concepts actually used are borrowed from Kurt Lewin. Their stated objectives were to chart the frequency, and degree of occurrence, of basic psychological phenomena—deprivation, hostility, rewards, and punishments —under actually observed natural conditions.

Barker and Wright left the psychologists' experimental laboratory for their expedition into the unfamiliar terrain of the human community, carrying a heavy burden of intra-professional chauvinism. They report they wanted "to make a purely psychological approach" to the study of "human behavior in its natural psychological habitat" (p. 3). Therefore, they deliberately ignored what social anthropologists and sociologists have learned about human behavior in a communal setting, and the methods they have developed for studying it. The decision to "go it alone" forced them to develop their own conceptions of what they were observing, and ways of recording their observations.

As a consequence, most of *Midwest and Its Children* is given over to methodological notes, definitions, enumerations, tables, charts, maps and diagrams. This is to be expected in a research report, but they are presented often without their purpose or connection with the data being adequately explained. In Chapter IV, "The Behavior Setting Survey: Results," for example, there is a list of 585 items stretching over 20 pages. This list is introduced with the cryptic comment "On Base Map, Figure 4.33, the varieties of settings are numbered and can be identified in the catalogue" (p. 156). Base Map 4.33, printed on page 153, is a series of shaded, and cross-hatched circles without a legend. The chapter ends after item 585 on "High-School Biology Class Field Trip (S; GM, T, TH) 16" on the bottom of page 176, without a word of comment. This reviewer was left dangling in "psychological space" at this point.

Thousands of man hours of professional time have gone into this study, and from internal evidence one judges the field work was carefully done, but the book is unfinished, as the preceding example indicates. Moreover, the data assembled by the methods of "psychological ecology" are not articulated with the "psychological habitats" where the community's inhabitants behave. Neither are the behaviors observed in the "psychological habitats" related to their social and cultural "habitats." Finally, some incomprehensible statements are made when the authors return from "psychological space" to 'behavior settings' somewhat familiar to sociologists. To wit, in the second introductory paragraph to their summary chapter they state: "Since its founding almost 100 years before, it (Midwest) had not been directly influenced by cultural forces from outside the country." "Midwest was highly literate and had an advanced level of technological development; it was possible to live a 'modern' life within the borders of the town" (p. 458). How can a wheat belt community not be "directly influenced" by historical, cultural, and social forces that have transformed the world in the last 100 years, and still be "modern?"

The authors of *Midwest and Its Children* set forth upon their journey of "psychological exploration" without a glance at maps, blazed trails, or guides who know something of the climate, terrain, flora and fauna, of cultural and social "habitats." They have returned; their observations of "psychological ecology" are before us. Their report may reward a diligent sociologist with some new insights into the "foreign hull" of "psychological habitats," but he will have to apply himself to the task of doing much of the unfinished analysis. Few readers will take the time, and fewer are equipped for the work.

We hope, on their next journey, Barker and Wright will attempt to articulate "psychological habitats" with social and cultural "habitats." Then, we may have a more adequate understanding of human behavior than emerges from this report. Perhaps, when the congruent facts are fitted together, a coherent ecology of human behavior will emerge.

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Catholic-Protestant Conflicts in America. By JOHN J. KANE. Chicago: Regnery, 1955. ix, 244 pp. $3.50.

Dr. Kane is a Catholic and a professional sociologist. He was trained at a nonsectarian university (Pennsylvania), but now teaches at a Catholic university (Notre Dame). For some years he was a regional director for the National Conference of Christians and Jews. With this background, he seems well equipped to give a reasonably objective and dispassionate account of Protestant-Catholic relations. To this reviewer, it seems that Dr. Kane has succeeded rather well. He recognizes very explicitly that there are faults on both sides. He avoids emotional language and tries to document his facts. However, a non-Catholic reviewer might complain, not unjustly, that a good deal more space is devoted to the ways of Protestants that irri-

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